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LETTER DATED 22 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 19 December 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, concerning violations of Iraq's airspace committed by the United States U-2 spy plane.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 19 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to our letter to you of 2 September 1998 (S/1998/829) concerning the violation of Iraqi airspace by a United States U-2 spy plane on the pretext of making an aerial survey for the United Nations Special Commission.

I should like to inform you that this aircraft, operating from Saudi territory, has continued to enter Iraqi airspace, undermining Iraq's sovereignty and security. From the first such operation, in August 1991, through the end of September 1998, this aircraft has made 426 flights lasting a total of 1,827 hours and 27 minutes.

The facts that have been brought to light since this aircraft was first used, which we set out in the aforementioned letter, compound the notoriety which this aircraft has acquired in the course of prior acts of espionage carried out over various parts of the world and make it imperative for the United Nations to reconsider the continued use of this aircraft, which the United States of America is using by force to violate Iraqi airspace and to spy on Iraq, and not to achieve the objectives of the Special Commission. This completely contradicts the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, namely respect for the sovereignty of all Member States and non-intervention in their internal affairs.

While strongly condemning these unjustified violations of Iraq's airspace, I should like on this occasion to reiterate the request which I have constantly made in my previous letters to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which to date number 136, inviting the Special Commission to use Iraqi aircraft, and not foreign aircraft, in its work so as to prevent any possibility of such aircraft being used for purposes that undermine the sovereignty and security of Iraq.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq